

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: DOH Office of Communications
Jessica Hammonds, (850) 245-4111

**STATE SURGEON GENERAL APPLAUDS DEVELOPMENT OF FIRST HEALTH
DISPARITIES RESEARCH AGENDA FOR FLORIDA**
- Agenda is the work of 31 esteemed state researchers -

TALLAHASSEE – State Surgeon General Dr. Frank Farmer today applauds the development of Florida’s first Health Disparities Research Agenda. The Agenda was created by a partnership with the Florida Department of Health’s (DOH’s) Office of Minority Health, the Florida Center for Universal Research to Eradicate Disease (FL CURED), and the Biomedical Research Advisory Council (BRAC) in coordination with 31 of the state’s top health disparities researchers and outlines a research plan intent upon achieving health equity for all Floridians.

“I applaud the development of this important plan as the first step of public and private health researchers moving forward on a path together to improve the health of underserved groups,” said State Surgeon General, Dr. Frank Farmer.

Florida, one of the most diverse states in the nation, has a total population of 18.8 million. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, of that number, 22.5 percent are Hispanic, 16 percent African American/Black, 2.4 percent Asian, 0.4 percent American Indian/Alaskan, 0.1 percent Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and 6.1 percent other races/two or more races. In addition, statewide data from FY 2010 reveals that nearly 11 percent of Florida’s adults think they would get better medical care if they belonged to a different race or ethnic group. In reality, Floridians of various ethnic/racial backgrounds do experience meaningful health disparities such as higher proportions of heart and other cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, and infant mortality.



“Given these demographic and health status trends, it is clear that Florida is at a critical point in making changes to improve not only the health of emerging majorities and underserved groups, but also the health of all Floridians,” said State Surgeon General Dr. Frank Farmer. “Research offers new insight and innovative solutions to otherwise irretractable problems as seen in disparate health outcomes.”

The Health Disparities Research Agenda is unique because it links academic institutions, health care providers, and government, community-based and faith-based organizations together to address three areas of priority requiring continued research:

1. Health Promotion, including all issues related to the modification of health behaviors, promotion of screening services, communication between health care organizations and patients and other issues that can prevent the occurrence of disparities.

2. Health Outcomes, including evaluation of the extent of health disparities across a number of health conditions at different stages in the life span, their determinants and the impact of interventions on these disparities. For example, health conditions identified for adult populations include cardiovascular, cancer, respiratory, HIV/AIDS, among others.
3. Cancer/Genetics, including a more in-depth agenda of research for this important source of health disparities in Florida.

Health disparities are differences in health based on specific population characteristics, including gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, income, social class, disability, geographic location and/or sexual orientation. In bringing together multidisciplinary experts from around the state, the Health Disparities Research Agenda provides its own diversity to address the needs of Florida's unique populations. The priorities identified represent the first phase of the Research Agenda, based on the expertise of the experts involved. Efforts are underway to gather input from a variety of stakeholders to expand the Research agenda in the future.

For more information on DOH's of Minority Health's visit the web site at <http://www.floridashealth.com/Minority/index.htm>. The report can be found on DOH's web site at http://www.floridashealth.com/Minority/images/HealthDisparitiesResearchAgenda_Phase1.pdf.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES:

Melvena Wilson, DrPH., Acting Assistant Director, Office of Minority Health, DOH: "The Health Disparities Research Agenda is a historical first for Florida's disparities research community. The agenda provides a specific plan of action for a diverse group of Florida's disparities researchers, emerging majority and underserved community partners as well as public and private entities to join forces. At this tipping point of science and 21st century strategies, we can collectively harness the state's considerable research capacity and aggressively focus that effort to eliminate health disparities. I am enormously proud to be a part of this very important effort."

Michael D. Devine, Ph.D., Executive Director, FL CURED: "FL CURED was proud to be a part of this unprecedented state-wide collaboration to address one of Florida's most pressing health research needs."

B. Lee Green, PhD, Vice President, Moffitt Diversity: "The Moffitt Cancer Center is proud of the significant contributions it has made towards improving the health of Florida's citizens. We are especially proud to be a part of this incredible effort to develop a plan to address one of the most pressing public health issues in the state and nation - health disparities. This effort has been clear evidence that by working together, we become stronger and more committed to eliminating health disparities in Florida."

HEALTH DISPARITIES RESEARCH (HDR) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Leadership Team

Penny A. Ralston, Ph.D., Florida State University, Chairperson

B. Lee Green, Ph.D., Moffitt Cancer Center

Monica Hayes, Ed.D., Florida Department of Health

Folakemi T. Odedina, Ph.D., University of Florida

Work Groups

Cancer/Genetics

Lisa Baumbach-Reardon, Ph.D., University of Miami, Group Leader
Renee Reams, Ph.D., Florida A & M University, Group Leader
Danny Armstrong, Ph.D., University of Miami
Jaibun Earp, Ph.D., Florida A & M University
B. Lee Green, Ph.D., Moffitt Cancer Center
Henrietta Logan, M.D., University of Florida
Erin Kobetz, Ph.D., University of Miami
Levi McIntosh, Ed.D., 100 Black Men
Folakemi Odedina, Ph.D., University of Florida

Health Outcomes

David Wood, M.D., University of Florida-Jacksonville, Group Leader
Joyce Balls-Berry, Ph.D., University of Florida-Jacksonville
Alexandra C.H. Nowakowski, MPH, FL CURED
Ana Palacio, M.D., University of Miami
Martha Perryman, Ph.D., Florida A & M University
Penny Ralston, Ph.D., Florida State University
Eric Stewart, M.D., University of Florida-Jacksonville
Jocelyn Turner, Duval County Health Department
Thomas Wan, Ph.D., University of Central Florida

Health Promotion/Disease Prevention

Mia Liza Lustria, Ph.D., Florida State University, Group Leader
John Ryan, Dr.PH., University of Miami, Group Leader
Tya Arthur, Ph.D., University of Florida
Lisa Barkley, M.D., University of Central Florida
Angeline Bushy, Ph.D., University of Central Florida
Barbara Curbow, Ph.D., University of Florida
Lance Gravlee, Ph.D., University of Florida
Monica Hayes, Ed.D., Florida Department of Health
Laureen Husband, Ed.D., Duval County Health Department
Prabir Mandal, Ph.D., Edward Waters College
Judith Rodriguez, Ph.D., University of North Florida
Shaláwa Triggs, YMCA of Florida's First Coast
Carolyn Tucker, Ph.D., University of Florida

FL CURED Staff

Michael Smith, MA, MPA, Principal Investigator
Michael Devine, Ph.D., Executive Director
Scott Helzer, Ph.D., Program Director
Tommy Bowermeister, M.S. Ed., MAS, MA, DOH Liaison
Terri Menser, MBA, Program Coordinator
Alexandra C.H. Nowakowski, MPH, Program Coordinator

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